

The Push-Pull-Mooring Model of Service Switching: A Meta-Analysis

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

For years, the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model – as introduced to service research by Bansal, Taylor, and St. James (2005) – has been used by scholars to explain consumers’ service switching intentions and behaviours. Adapted from migration research (Bogue 1969; Lee 1966; Moon 1995), the PPM model suggests that there are negative factors at the origin that push people away (push), and positive factors at the destination that pull people towards it (pull). Furthermore, there are personal and social factors that can either inhibit or facilitate the migration decision (mooring). The analogy is straightforward: Consumers (migrants) switch (move) from one service (place) to another.

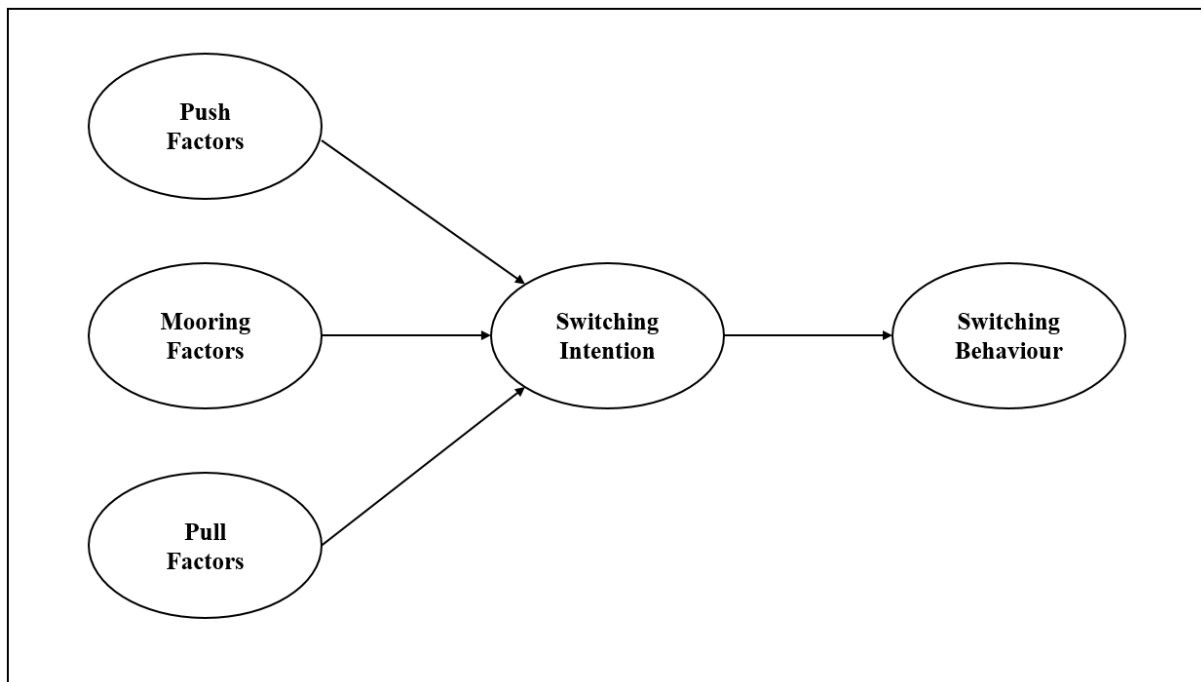


Figure 1. The PPM model of service switching by Bansal, Taylor, and St. James (2005)

The PPM model provides a useful theoretical framework to include different predictor variables commonly associated with service switching (e.g., dissatisfaction, switching costs) by categorising them as push, pull, or mooring factors (Bansal, Taylor, and St. James 2005). However, empirical evidence about the PPM model remains fragmented and ambiguous. The categorisation of predictor variables, reported effect sizes, and effect directions vary considerably. In response, this meta-analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the use of the PPM model in the literature and to synthesise previously inconclusive findings.

We conducted an elaborate literature search to identify studies using the PPM model by searching the following electronic databases: Ebsco, Econbiz, Google Scholar, Jstor, Proquest, Scopus, Social Science Research Network, and Web of Science. Furthermore, we reviewed the reference lists in all appropriate studies to find additional studies not yet included in our database. The search yielded a total of 220 studies. Of these, 131 empirical-quantitative studies were included for further analysis. Based on these 131 studies, we created a dataset containing

all predictor variables used and their categorisation as push, pull, or mooring factors. Figure 2 shows the ten most frequently used variables and their respective categorisation.

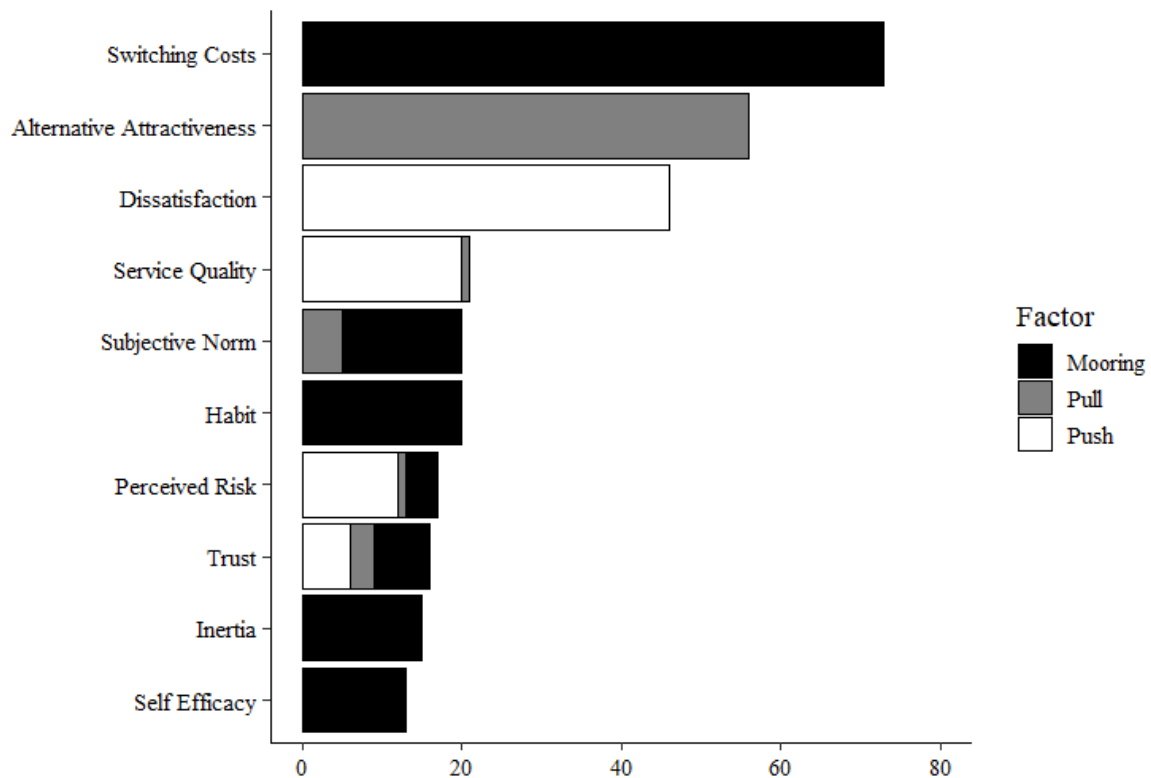


Figure 2. Most frequently used PPM variables

As Figure 2 illustrates, categorisation is ambiguous for some variables in the literature. In contrast, categorisation for the three most frequently used variables (i.e., switching costs, alternative attractiveness, dissatisfaction) is unequivocal. Thus, we focus on these three variables to develop our research model (Figure 3).

Dissatisfaction can be defined as *a psychological state that arises when a consumer's experience is coupled with disconfirmed expectations* (Oliver 1981). According to expectation-confirmation theory, a consumer's intention to discontinue using a service is primarily determined by their dissatisfaction (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Oliver 1980). We thus hypothesise that dissatisfaction increases switching intention (H₁).

Switching costs can be defined as *a consumer's perceived economic and psychological costs associated with changing from one alternative to another* (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty 2002). These costs are seldom explicitly assessed but become salient when consumers are faced with a reason to consider switching (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan 2003). As such, switching costs can be thought of as barriers that hold consumers in service relationships (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty 2000; 2002). Thus, we hypothesise that switching costs decrease switching intention (H₂).

Alternative attractiveness refers to *a consumer's perceptions regarding the extent to which viable competing alternatives are available* (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty 2000). When consumers have few attractive alternatives, the likelihood of terminating an existing service relationship decreases as the perceived benefit of switching decreases (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty 2000). We thus assume that alternative attractiveness increases switching intention (H₃).

Switching intention can be defined as *a consumer's intention to switch services* whereas switching behaviour refers to *a consumer's actual switching behaviour* (Ajzen 1991; Bansal,

Taylor, and St. James 2005). Intentions are generally considered the best predictor of behaviour (Ajzen 1991). We thus hypothesise that switching intention increases switching behaviour (H₄).

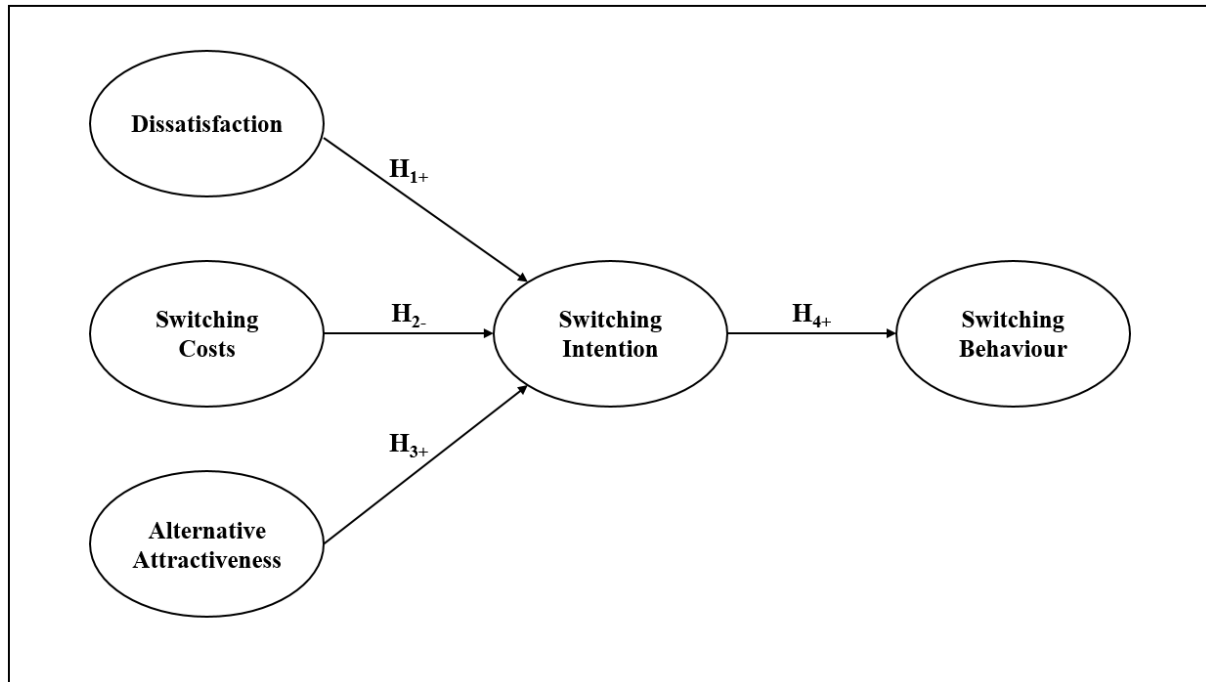


Figure 3. Research model

We used meta-analytic structural equation modeling (MASEM) to test our research model. MASEM refers to fitting structural equation models (SEM) to meta-analytic data using correlation matrices (Jak and Cheung 2021). Our MASEM database includes (1) all empirical-quantitative PPM model studies that (2) report correlation matrices or metrics that we could transform into correlations (e.g., standardised betas; Peterson and Brown 2005), and (3) contain at least two variables from our research model. This final database includes 88 studies.

Out of the various MASEM methods available, one-stage MASEM is the most versatile method as it can evaluate the effect of continuous and categorical moderators, without creating subgroups (Jak and Cheung 2021). Furthermore, one-stage MASEM has been shown to work well with incomplete data (Jak and Cheung 2020) and is thus well suited for our analysis.

Parameters	k	N	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	p value
<i>Hypothesised paths:</i>						
DS → SI	41	15,463	.219	.041	5.391	< .001
SC → SI	60	20,823	-.167	.044	-3.769	< .001
AA → SI	44	17,456	.380	.035	10.973	< .001
SI → SB	10	4,530	.607	.049	12.495	< .001
<i>Correlations:</i>						
DS ↔ AA	16	6,805	.244	.055	4.419	< .001
DS ↔ SC	20	7,272	-.026	.066	-.396	.692
AA ↔ SC	20	6,051	-.093	.065	-1.413	.158

Table 1. One-stage MASEM results

Notes: $R^2_{SI}=73\%$, $R^2_{SB}=63\%$, k: Number of correlations per relation, N: Total number of respondents across k samples, DS: Dissatisfaction, SC: Switching Costs, AA: Alternative Attractiveness, SI: Switching Intention, SB: Switching Behaviour

Table 1 summarises the MASEM results for our research model. Based on the fit indices ($\chi^2/d.f.=1.507$, RMSEA=.004, SRMR=.082, TLI=.975, CFI=.993), the overall model fit can be considered adequate. The results show that dissatisfaction ($\beta=.219$, $p<.001$, H₁) and alternative attractiveness ($\beta=.380$, $p<.001$, H₃) increase switching intention, which has a positive effect on switching behaviour ($\beta=.607$, $p<.001$, H₄). Moreover, the results show that switching costs decrease switching intention ($\beta=-.167$, $p<.001$, H₂). Thus, all hypotheses can be confirmed.

In summary, this study provides the first comprehensive overview and meta-analytical test of the PPM model. Therein, we believe the results are valuable to researchers in the field and hope they will help to guide future research in a systematic way. However, there are important challenges that still need to be addressed. First, we intend to ask the authors of the studies in our database for missing information. Second, we plan to contact scholars in the field to ask for unpublished work as well as currently inaccessible work. Finally, just like migration decisions (e.g., moving within a country or between countries), service switching decisions are nuanced. We thus aim to address these nuances through moderation analysis using service-based moderators (e.g., intangibility, coproduction) as well as demographic moderators (e.g., age, gender) in future research.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1991), "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50 (2), 179–211.
- Anderson, E. W. and M. W. Sullivan (1993), "The Antecedents and Consequences of Customer Satisfaction for Firms," *Marketing Science*, 12 (2), 125–43.
- Bansal, H. S., S. F. Taylor, and Y. St. James (2005), "'Migrating' to New Service Providers: Toward a Unifying Framework of Consumers' Switching Behaviors," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 33 (1), 96–115.
- Bogue, D. J. (1969), *Principles of Demography*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Burnham, T. A., J. K. Frels, and V. Mahajan (2003), "Consumer Switching Costs: A Typology, Antecedents, and Consequences," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31 (2), 109–26.
- Jak, S. and M. W.-L. Cheung (2020), "Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Modeling with Moderating Effects on SEM Parameters," *Psychological Methods*, 25 (4), 430–355.
- Jak, S., Li. H., L. Kolbe, H. de Jonge, and M. W.-L. Cheung (2021), "Meta-analytic Structural Equation Modeling Made Easy: A Tutorial and Web Application for One-stage MASEM," *Research Synthesis Methods*, 12 (5), 590–606.
- Jones, M. A., D. L. Mothersbaugh, and S. E. Beatty (2000), "Switching Barriers and Repurchase Intentions in Services," *Journal of Retailing*, 76 (2), 259–74.
- Jones, M. A., D. L. Mothersbaugh, and S. E. Beatty (2002), "Why Customers Stay: Measuring the Underlying Dimensions of Services Switching Costs and Managing Their Differential Strategic Outcomes," *Journal of Business Research*, 55 (6), 441–50.
- Lee, E. S. (1966), "A Theory of Migration," *Demography*, 3 (1), 47–57.
- Moon, B. (1995), "Paradigms in Migration Research: Exploring 'Mooring' as a Schema," *Progress in Human Geography*, 19 (4), 504–24.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980), "A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17 (4), 460–9.
- Oliver, R. L. (1981), "Measurement and Evaluation of Satisfaction Processes in Retail Settings," *Journal of Retailing*, 57 (3), 25–48.
- Peterson, R. A. and S. P. Brown (2005), "On the Use of Beta Coefficients in Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (1), 175–81.